ALBERTA

Alberta
MULTICULTURALISM COMMISSION

TRANSITION TEAM

REPORT

RECOMMENDATIONS

FOR THE

ESTABLISHMENT AND OPERATION

OF THE

MULTICULTURALISM ADVISORY COUNCIL

SUBMITTED TO THE

CHAIRMAN, ALBERTA MULTICULTURALISM COMMISSION

AUGUST 1, 1990

Alberta
MULTICULTURAL COMMISSION

91-00330/

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August 2, 1990

Mr. Steve Zarusky, Chairman
Alberta Multiculturalism Commission
3rd fl, 12431 Stony Plain Road
EDMONTON, AB
T5N 3N3

Dear Mr. Zarusky:

It is with sincere pleasure that I submit, on behalf of the Transition Team, our report regarding the Recommendations for the Establishment and Operation of the Multiculturalism Advisory Council.

The Transition Team informally surveyed stakeholders throughout the process of preparing the report and wish to acknowledge the assistance received from the Commission staff.

In particular we wish to thank the Commission members who met with us informally to discuss the recommendations concerning the MAC prior to their inclusion in our report.

I know I speak on behalf of the members of the Transition Team when I say how much we appreciated the opportunity to assist in facilitating the Government's strategy for multiculturalism.

Sincerely,

Uwe Welz, Chairman
Transition Team

Att:

cc: Orest Olineck
Anwar Siddiqi
Helen Fitzgerald
Lily Oishi
Harpal (Pali) Pawa
Susan Coombes
Manuel da Costa, A.D.M.

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

On April 26, 1990, the Honourable Doug Main, Minister of Culture and Multiculturalism established a Transition Team for the task of providing options for membership of an advisory council of 20 to 30 members, and to provide options of strategies for the advisory council's first year of operation.

This document is the Transition Team's report. It provides recommendations for the establishment and operation of the Multiculturalism Advisory Council.

Team Members:

Chairman - Uwe Welz, Edmonton
Susan Coombes, Calgary
Helen Fitzgerald, Red Deer
Lily Oishi, Lethbridge
Orest Olineck, Vegreville
Harpal (Pali) Pawa, Calgary
Anwar Siddiqi, Fort McMurray
Sylvia Sziva (Secretary)

RECOMMENDATIONS

FOR THE

ESTABLISHMENT AND OPERATION

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MULTICULTURALISM ADVISORY COUNCIL

INTRODUCTION

On April 26, 1990 the Minister of Culture and Multiculturalism, the Honourable Doug Main, appointed a committee to address the following issues:

a) to give advice and to oversee the winding down of the present activities of the Alberta Cultural Heritage Council;
b) to provide options for membership of an advisory council of 20-30 members;
c) to provide options of strategies for the advisory councils first year of operation.

This paper deals with the establishment and general operations of the Multiculturalism Advisory Council (MAC).

TRANSITION TEAM PROCESS

The Transition Team informally surveyed stakeholders throughout the process of preparing this report. The Committee met with the Commission and discussed the recommendations concerning the MAC prior to their inclusion here.

ROLE AND MANDATE OF COUNCIL

The Alberta Multiculturalism Act (1990) states that "The purpose of the Council is to provide advice to the Commission on policies and programs referred to the Council by the Commission". The Committee recommends that **the MAC should work closely with**

the Commission and should endeavour to:

- **provide advice on issues related to the objectives of the Act;**
- **provide advice on policy directions as identified by the Commission;**
- **serve as a sounding board for both the Commission Board and staff;**
- **assist in identification of emerging issues.**

The Transition Team believes that the objectives of the Act will serve as guiding principles to enable the MAC to function in concert with the Commission. This committee also feels that the MAC provides a resource that can be used to test ideas and discuss issues prior to decisions being made about policy, program, priorities or government direction. In addition, the MAC could assist with the monitoring and evaluation of these. The diversity of interests, skills, knowledge and involvements of the MAC members will provide a different perspective on issues. While there is a clear understanding that advice will be sought from the MAC, the Committee sees that emerging issue identification and referral by the MAC to the Commission may also be desirable.

MEMBERSHIP OF MULTICULTURALISM ADVISORY COMMITTEE

There was unanimous agreement that individuals appointed to the MAC should be selected based on their skills, knowledge and expertise. The community consensus, based upon the informal survey conducted by the Transition Team, was that individuals selected to represent a group have difficulty responding quickly and that all members should rise above vested interests to work for the betterment of multiculturalism. Although some members may not have been involved in multiculturalism prior to their selection to the MAC, there should be a desire to work for multiculturalism. Above all the Transition Team recommends that **the MAC should reflect the diversity of Alberta's population, taking into consideration age, gender, and cultural background and experience, and drawing members from throughout Alberta.**

In order to assist with the selection process, the Committee suggests some categories that we believe will bring a diversity of opinions to the MAC:

1. Institutions - people working in the fields identified as Commission priorities. This could include health, education, municipalities and business, corporate and professional sectors.
2. Multiculturalism stakeholders - selection of individuals who are involved with:
   a) provincial unicultural organizations (i.e. Polish Congress, Hispanic Congress), or
   b) multicultural organizations, or
   c) interest groups (i.e. Alberta Association for Multicultural Education, Association of Immigrant Serving Agencies), or
   d) multicultural centres and societies from regions.

3. Individuals who bring specialized knowledge in issue areas such as media, settlement, native rights and culture, human rights/race relations, visible minority issues, multiculturalizing of arts and heritage languages, french language issues and economic development including trade and tourism.

4. The Minister should have the option to appoint individuals who may not have any formal exposure to multiculturalism but have an interest in working towards the objectives of multiculturalism. They should have a solid knowledge of Alberta society.

The Committee recommends that **members be appointed from each of the first three categories in approximately equal numbers and that the appointments be staggered to provide continuity**. Initial appointments would end in the spring of 1992, 1993, and 1994 and subsequent appointments should be for three years.

MEMBERSHIP CRITERIA

In addition to striving for individuals with a diversity of interests and background, the Committee would like to see individuals selected who possess some or all of these characteristics:

a) can effect change in multiculturalism in their own situation;
b) are perceived to be impartial (not representing a special interest);
c) have demonstrated an involvement in the objectives of the Act, or have an interest in working in multiculturalism to effect change;
d) have a knowledge of multiculturalism, related issues, and be sensitive to the diverse nature of our society;
e) have credibility in their own field;
f) have credibility in multiculturalism if they have been working in the area;
g) have demonstrated the skills described in the draft job advertisement (see attached Appendix).

OPERATIONAL STRUCTURE

The optimum operational style of the MAC was discussed. The following options were suggested:

a) To meet as a committee of the whole on a regularly scheduled basis and in smaller issue related task groups which would meet on an as required basis. Task groups would be accountable to the MAC.
b) To establish three committees - access, awareness and integration. These committees would deal with issues related to the individual priority areas.
c) To meet as a whole at regularly scheduled meetings.

The Transition Team recommends that:

a) **Flexibility of operational structure be central to the MAC.**
b) **The first year meeting schedule include orientation, organizational and joint (AMC & MAC) meetings as well as issue related task groups.**
c) **The MAC function both in issue related task groups and as a committee of the whole.**

It is our recommendation that formal standing committees not be established and that the work be accomplished by ad hoc task groups who are accountable to the MAC.

STRUCTURE OF THE MULTICULTURALISM ADVISORY COUNCIL

The Alberta Multiculturalism Act (1990) states that "The vice chairman of the Commission is the Chairman of the Council". In addition to the Chair, a small infrastructure would also be useful. The Committee feels that minimum structure should include a chair and vice chair. The vice chair would be elected by members of the MAC. Options for this structure include:

a) chair and vice chair;
b) chair, vice chair and task leaders (as needed);.
c) chair and vice chair plus standing committee chairs and committee vice chairs or recorders.

The Committee recommends that:

a) **task groups be established as specific issues are referred; and**
b) **no formal executive be established but the chair, vice chair and a representative of the task groups, coordinate council activities.**

It is expected that these smaller groups will report back and be accountable to the MAC as a whole. Council members and task force leaders may be required to provide advice or direction on extremely short notice.

SUPPORT REQUIREMENTS

Council members will draw upon a wealth of experience. However, there will be occasions where additional information is required to provide credible and reliable advice. The Committee recognizes the following methods for collection of the required information:

a) to use knowledge and expertise of members only and information that is easily obtainable;
b) to use commission staff;
c) to invite guests with special knowledge to participate in meetings;

d) to have the ability to contract for special projects once this expenditure is approved;
e) to hire a researcher for the MAC for permanent ongoing review and collection of information.

At this time, the volume of information gathering that will be required is not known. It would not be practical to hire anyone except as required for special projects. Often Commission staff already have information that could help the MAC with recommendations. On some occasions staff may have to collect new information for the MAC. The Committee recommends that:

a) The MAC invite specialists to meetings and use staff resources wherever possible for data and information gathering and that the MAC have the

ability with prior approval to contract for special projects.

b) **Continuity of support staff and management level liaison (strongly recommended).**

c) **A half time Executive Secretary be assigned.**

From time to time, there may be information that government, staff or commission members have that will have to be treated as confidential by the MAC. The issue of confidentiality and access to information will have to be addressed individually item by item.

LINKAGES BETWEEN AMC AND MAC

The Committee believes that unless formal and informal opportunities for information sharing and working together are structured, the effectiveness of the MAC will be diminished. Below are listed some suggestions to build this relationship:

Formal

a) vice chair of Commission is chair of Council

b) agenda item on both Commission and the MAC meetings is a report from the other body

c) formal written reports issued by Chair of the MAC to Chair of Commission.

Informal

a) Commission members would participate in joint task force/task groups.

b) Joint annual meeting to review and plan.

c) Joint attendance of selected members at focused (theme) conference(s).

d) Joint orientation sessions for new MAC and Commission members.

e) Continuity of staff liaison with both the MAC and AMC.

f) Continuity of Commission support staff assigned to work with the MAC.

g) Informal discussion/dialogue opportunities.

h) Meet with Minister and Commission Chair at least once per year.

SELECTION/APPOINTMENT

The Alberta Multiculturalism Act (1990) states that the MAC will be composed of "persons appointed by the Minister". The Committee recommends that **the Government contact targeted groups and use public media to advertise throughout Alberta for members of the MAC and then select the most qualified individuals based on the criteria discussed earlier**. This procedure would be in addition to having staff and government contact key players and individuals (i.e. Alberta Nurses' Association, Chamber of Commerce) and to suggest names for appointment to the MAC. The advantages to advertising for membership are as follows:

a) credibility for the MAC (members selected because of expertise);

b) perceived impartiality of selection

c) equality of opportunity;

d) opportunity to recruit individuals new to the multiculturalism field or previously little known outside their area;

e) ability to locate non traditional target human resources.

APPENDIX

DRAFT
JOB ADVERTISEMENT

The role of the Multiculturalism Advisory Council is to provide advice on issues arising from implementation of the goals and objectives set forth in the Alberta Multiculturalism Act (1990) which are:

a) to encourage respect for the multicultural heritage of Alberta;
b) to promote an awareness and understanding of the multicultural heritage of Alberta;
c) to foster an environment in which all Albertans can participate in and contribute to the cultural, social, economic and political life of Alberta;
d) to encourage all sectors of Alberta's society to provide access to services and equality of opportunity.

The Council is comprised of approximately two dozen individuals and provides advice to the Alberta Multiculturalism Commission on issues referred to it and serves as a sounding board on current issues.

The Council meets approximately four times per year in various locations throughout Alberta. In addition, members are expected to participate in issue related task groups on an as required basis.

Councils' composition is representative of a cross-section of Alberta's diverse population. Their responsibility is to the Alberta Multiculturalism Commission. Council members are selected on the basis of their knowledge, special skills and commitment to the objectives of the Act.

Skills which are especially desirable include:

a) ability to work as a team player in a diverse organization;
b) above average listening and communication skills;
c) ability to analyze issues, priorize and consider alternative solutions;
d) demonstrated personal leadership skills and the ability to effect change;
e) ability to focus on task(s) and work within guidelines and constraints; and
f) above all, must be sensitive and bring an understanding of present day issues and ability to work for the benefit of all.